



Project no: 022936

Project acronym: Beneris

Project title: Benefit-risk assessment for food: an iterative value-of-information approach

Instrument: STP-Specific Targeted Project

Deliverable 31:

Enduser evaluation

Due date of deliverable: **1 January, 2008**

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Dissemination level: **PU**

Start date of project: **April, 1st 2006**

Duration: **3,5 years**

Organisation name of the lead contractor for this deliverable: **THL**

D31: Enduser evaluation

As the first part of end-user evaluation (D31), we summarize below the feedback regarding the use of open assessment method and the Opasnet workspace for applying the method. The feedback has been collected from the participants of **Kuopio risk assessment workshop 2008** and **Open assessment workshop 2009**, using **feedback questionnaires**. Both of the workshops consisted of lectures on open assessment method and group work exercises of applying the method with the aid of Opasnet workspace (known by the name Heande at the time of the 2008 workshop).

The feedback has been taken into account in the development of both the method and the workspace as it has been received. This paper summarizes the main issues that have been brought up by the users of the method and the workspace along the project. The programmes of the two workshops, the feedback questions, and the relevant feedback comments are presented after the feedback summary.

Summary

In the **2008 workshop feedback**, the main messages were:

1. Open assessment is a complex set of theory, methods and tools, whose use and understanding require quite a lot of effort and commitment.
2. The method and the workspace are still undergoing development, which hinders their applicability.
3. The philosophy behind the method and the workspace and their conceptual readiness were quite well appreciated.

In the **2009 workshop feedback**, the main messages were:

1. There is still plenty of space for improvement in the usability of the workspace, although many of the functionalities do work already.
2. The overview of the method has become more understandable, but some specific parts of the method can still be difficult to conceive.
3. It is not so much questioned whether the method and the workspace can work, but rather it remains to be proved whether they provide a real improvement to current conventions.

More feedback will be collected and more thorough analyses will be made for a follow-up deliverable "D46 End-user evaluation (2)". D46 will also include more consideration of how the feedback results are to be taken into account in the future development and application of the method and the workspace.

Kuopio Risk Assessment Workshop 2008

18-22 February 2008

Preparatory work prior to the workshop:

Familiarization to Analytica software

Familiarization to Mediawiki software

Familiarization to the Gasbus case study

Familiarization to Open Assessment theory and methods

Workshop:

18 February 2008

9:00-11:45 Lecture: Introduction to Open Risk Assessment (ORA) and the workshop

Lecture: General assessment framework

12:45-16:45 Group work: Issue framing of Gasbus case study

19 February 2008

9:00-11:45 Lecture: Information structure of ORA – assessment products and their relations

Lecture: Information structure of ORA – defining variables

12:45-16:45 Group work: Defining variables of Gasbus case study

20 February 2008

9:00-11:45 Lecture: Participating in assessments – argumentation

Lecture: Participating in assessments – moderation and quality control

16:00-19:00 Group work: Compiling Gasbus case study variables into an assessment

21 February 2008

9:00-11:45 Lecture: Evaluating assessment performance

Lecture: Assessing uncertainties

12:45-16:45 Group work: Improving the Gasbus case study assessment

22 February 2008

9:00-11:45 Group work: Evaluation of the Gasbus case study assessment

12:45-14:00 Group work: Evaluation of the workshop

More information about the workshop can be found also at:

http://en.opasnet.org/w/Kuopio_Risk_Assessment_Workshop_2008

The feedback was collected in writing according to the following issues:

- The arrangement of the workshop; lectures, exercises, other practical arrangements
- Overall performance of the workshop

The feedback questions did not explicitly address the open assessment method and the Opasnet workspace (by the time of the workshop known by the name "Heande") particularly. Therefore we have identified the comments given regarding the exercises, lectures, or overall performance, but which, directly or indirectly, address either the method or the workspace. The workshop participants (26 people in total) were mainly young researchers (PhD students and post-docs) working in fields related to environmental health.

Feedback quotes:

The groupwork on Monday and Friday was interesting, but the variable discussions I - as a business student - found them boring.

Working in the wiki (particularly the "discussions" session) was very informative and a totally new experience for some people.

I also felt that overall the groupwork did result in a feeling of accomplishment, even though our "own" assessment was really quite a limited version of the actual assessment.

Issues raised during the workshop:

- *where to put the context?*
- *where to list major assumptions*
- *how to do proper evaluation?*
- *how to address/involve different user groups?*

Interesting workshop, since ORA describes a new perspective towards risk assessment. Requires more user-friendliness, but understandability for "assessors" has already been improved since last year.

ORA is still in more in the phase of conceptual thinking, making quantitative work impossible yet.

Understandability and applicability as well require some thinking/effort. Conceptual basis is more or less ready.

[...] everything was perfect in my view except for the pages which were in the restricted area.

[...] is the workshop appointed for beginners, who have never work with this type of ORA (because then it was quite difficult to understand whole the theory)

[the group work was useful for my research] in terms of putting data on the wiki pages.

Some of the things made it even clearer that the method is still only half-done.

Some things went too far [...] When even the basics are so unclear to most people (like, what is a variable), there is no point in trying to visualize how ORA will revolutionize the publication of information in scientific field.

The assessment process as such could have been better.

[...] people attending the workshop did not have taht many comments or questions. I wonder why that is, and what do they actually think about this approach to making an assessment.

It was a little difficult for someone without prior knowledge about open risk assessment to follow.

Lectures were excellent, but personally it was difficult to use the knowledge in lectures in the group work.

Group work can be improved by having at least one person with good overview of the topic discussed in each group to improve knowledge sharing [...]

[the group work was] Quite well defined and clear work, although the ORA method as such is quite complicated.

Group work sometimes hindered by [...] difficult concepts.

Overll useful ideas, but some of it very abstract and difficult to imagine if they were sued in "daily research life" with other researchers and stakeholders who will need a whole week (like this workshop week) to understand the concepts.

A clear translation of theories to understandable practice is needed in order for those concepts to gain ground in research pracice (outside KTL) I think.

The defining of the variables was difficult and the subject of much discussion, so could have possibly done a bit more of this to get more practical experience.

I think that the workshop was mainly about the word OPEN and only a little about RISK ASSESSMENT. I think that it is great that your website are enabling OPEN risk assessment, but I think that OPEN risk assessment is not new method in risk assessment, it is the same method, but you open it to lots of participants. I will give you example:) I hardly know what for example DALY is and I did not learn it in the workshop. I would recommend to work much more with risk assessment generally and with Analytica software than with heande.

I had the feeling that this new approach is still under development, and I need more than one week to understand it all.

Open Assessment Workshop 2009

16-20 February 2009

Preparatory work prior to the workshop:

Familiarization to collaborative Mediawiki workspace

Familiarization to the case assessment: Impacts of emission trading on city-level (ET-CL)

Familiarization to Open Assessment theory and methods

Workshop program:

16 February 2009

9:15-11:45 Lecture: Open assessment in research

12:45-14:15 Lecture: Assessments – Science-based decision support I

14:45-16:45 Exercise: Introduction to case assessment and practical arrangements

17 February 2009

9:00-11:45 Lectures: Variables – Evolving interpretations of reality I + II

12:45-16:45 Exercise: Variable development

18 February 2009

9:00-11:45 Lectures: Science necessitates collaboration I + II

12:45-16:45 Exercise: Variable development in collaboration

19 February 2009

9:00-10:30 Lecture: – Science-based decision support II

14:00-16:45 Exercise: Assessment development

20 February 2009

9:00-10:30 Lecture: Evaluating assessment performance

10:30-11:45 Exercise: Assessment performance evaluation

12:45-14:00 Exercise: Assessment performance evaluation

More information about the workshop:

http://en.opasnet.org/w/Open_assessment_workshop_2009

The feedback was asked and received in writing from workshop participants according to the following issues:

- the arrangement of the workshop; lectures, exercises, other practical arrangements
- suggestions and comments about the open assessment method and Opasnet workspace
- ideas for future workshops

The feedback taken into account in this evaluation consists mainly of comments given about the method and the workspace. Also some feedback given regarding the lectures and exercises has been included wherein they addressed, directly or indirectly, the use of the method and the workspace. The workshop participants (15 people in total) were mainly young researchers (PhD students and post-docs) working in fields related to environmental health. Some of the participants had also participated in the Kuopio Risk Assessment Workshop 2008.

Feedback quotes:

In order to grasp more quickly the philosophy of open assessment, it would have been good to demonstrate and practice with the performance criteria first. This final workshop day clarified the objectives of performing OA (truth/need) and the relations between the assessment attributes, variable attributes and how they affect on the performance.

The structure of the variables seems to be a bit forced. It is not very suitable for value variables for example. So how can you make sure the user of Opasnet understands that all attributes need to be completed, where not necessarily all sub-attributes need to be filled. Or maybe others can be better visualized and added to the list. For example the discussion page is crucial for value variables: a pop-up of the discussion (at the D) and better moderation of discussion page would be needed.

Exercises became a bit too redundant after a while - in the sense of going to much over the same things after a while, but on the other hand that is a good representation and experience of iterative scientific method.

Always takes some time to "tune in" into the way you think.

Show how this method leads to better results (examples) and show how it links to methods that people already use (otherwise it might look like it's a very big (too big!) step from current practice.

I think the exercise on variable defining was a bit too difficult. Some people had to get used at the concept of defining variables and the working with wiki at the same time. This was a little bit too much. People started saying: "I won't do this for my own assessment: too difficult!". rest was fine.

Some topics would need to be more talked about (calibration vs. informativeness)

Allow more time for the exercise the first time as we are in our learning curve and and we lose a lot of time figuring out what to do.

Tutorial on the discussion part need to be more complete! (how to flag it and where to put the text etc...)

Opasnet: these may exist already, useful things could be:

- *"Getting started" page (including wiki for beginners)*
- *Page describing assessment structure*
- *Variable structure page*
- *Page describing Analytica shapes (nodes)*